



Knowledge to lead

Guidelines for Performing Needs Assessment

Three levels of needs assessment

Organizational analysis: Examines organizational effectiveness and identifies where training is needed. Examples of areas to consider: cost-effectiveness of the organization, changing technology, political trends, organizational goals and environmental footprint.

Task analysis: It informs about jobs and the necessary set of skills and knowledge to reach optimal performance. Potential sources of information: job descriptions, emerging trends in the job field, sample work, observation and literature review.

Individual analysis: Explores the quality of working performance of employees and determines the individuals who need further training.

The needs assessment process

1. Focusing on an area of concern or interest for the assessment
2. Determining and prioritizing "what should be"
3. Identifying discrepancies between "what is" and "what should be" (gap analysis)
4. Ranking discrepancies in order
5. Casually analyzing the greatest discrepancies
6. Collecting a solution strategy and;
7. Designing an action plan for implementation



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Tips

- When analyzing “what should be”, it is important to distinguish between actual needs, perceived needs and wants.
- After determining the needs, set the priorities in accordance with the institutional goals, realities and constraints.
- When identifying the solutions, ask yourself the question “Is training really the solution?” Training is not the ultimate resolution to all problems; maybe intervention is needed on the organizational level, such as restructuring, performance management or strategic planning.
- Use a variety of methods in order to get a true picture. Examples of methods: observation , nterview, focus groups, tests, questionnaires, consultations with experts and work samples.

How to overcome potential barriers to needs assessment?

Confidentiality: When you distribute a questionnaire or gather information in any other way make sure answers can be provided anonymously, if possible.

Management buy-in: Involve decision makers throughout the process, use data and calculations on cost-effectiveness to convince them about the benefits of needs assessment.

Employee participation: In order to have employees participate in the process, give them appropriate information about the purposes and expected results and benefits of needs assessment. Do not forget to inform them about the outcomes of your research.

Cost: Present needs assessment as an investment and illustrate with figures how the results would benefit the organization in the long term.

Work interruptions: In order not to distract employees from their work, keep interviews, questionnaires and surveys short and straightforward.



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